

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SY-05
SAJ-01 DHA-02 /066 W
-----251645Z 038402 /41

R 251415Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1941
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSULATE MUNICH
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 0241

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PROP, PFOR, CZ
SUBJECT: "VIGILANCE" CAMPAIGN: THE COMMONWEALTH CONNECTION

REF PRAGUE 0225

1. " FOREIGN AGENT" WHO APPEARED IN VIDEOTAPE WITH OTTO ORNEST
(REFTEL) HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED BY WESTERN DIPLOMATS AS W. JAMES
BONTHRON, DCM OF CANADIAN EMBASSY UNTIL AUGUST 1976. (EMBOFF
WHO SAW TV PROGRAM MISINTERPRETED CZECH PHRASE "REPRESENTATIVE
OFFICE" IN DRAFTING REFTEL. IT ACTUALLY REFERS TO DIPLOMATIC
AND CONSULAR REPRESENTATION). WE ARE REPEATING REFTEL TO OTTAWA.

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2. JIM BONTHRON IS NOW, WE BELIEVE, ASSIGNED TO CANADIAN
COMMERCIAL OFFICE IN NEW YORK. HE ORIGINALLY HAD U.S. AND
CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP, SERVED IN THE U.S. MARINES, AND WAS GRADUATED
FROM PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, BUT SUBSEQUENTLY BECAME EXCLUSIVELY
A CANADIAN CITIZEN. WE DO NOT EXPECT THAT ANYTHING WILL BE
MADE OF BONTHRON'S TIES TO U.S.

3. BRITISH EMBASSY SAID THAT IN SPITE OF BBC REPORT THAT FOREIGN OFFICE HAD DENIED ALLEGATIONS MADE IN CZECH TV BROADCAST, NEITHER HMG NOR EMBASSY HAS PROTESTED PROGRAM AND EMBASSY'S INCLINATION IS TO IGNORE IT. MUCH OF MATERIAL IN PROGRAM HAD BEEN CONTAINED IN MAY 1974 PROGRAM ALONG SAME LINES. BRITISH DO PLAN, HOWEVER, TO BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT CONTACTS WITH DISSIDENTS WHILE CHARTER 77 ISSUE IS HOT.

4. COMMENT: THE US AND THE FRG HAVE BEEN BEARING THE BRUNT OF ACCUSATIONS OF CARRYING OUT ESPIONAGE AND DIVERSIONARY ACTIVITY. WE WELCOME BRITISH BACK TO THE FOLD TO SHARE SOME OF THE HEAT. WE HAD BEEN PRIVATELY SPECULATING THAT OTHER NATO ALLIES, MOST LIKELY THE FRENCH OR ITALIANS, MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE NEXT TARGETS AND WERE SURPRISED TO FIND THE CANADIANS SUDDENLY IN A STARRING ROLE. AT THIS POINT WE CANNOT PREDICT WHEN ORNEST AND THE OTHER THREE DEFENDANTS WILL ACTUALLY COME TO TRIAL, ALTHOUGH PREPARATION OF EVIDENCE AGAINST ORNEST HAS APPARENTLY BEEN UNDER WAY SINCE AT LEAST LAST MARCH, NOR CAN WE PREDICT WHETHER ORNEST'S CONNECTION WITH BONTHRON WILL BE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE EVIDENCE THAT IS MADE PUBLIC. BONTHRON'S UNEXPECTED APPEARANCE ON TV WILL, HOWEVER, AS NOTED IN REFTTEL, MAKE HIS DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES JUMPY AND HAS ALREADY SERVED THE PURPOSE OF MAKING ALL DIPLOMATS HERE MORE CAUTIOUS ABOUT FOLLOWING UP DISSIDENT CONTACTS FOR THE TIME BEING.
BYRNE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC PROTESTS, TELEVISION BROADCASTING, DISSIDENT FACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 25-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PRAGUE00241
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770026-1242
Format: TEL
From: PRAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770120/aaaaarqv.tel
Line Count: 87
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
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Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 PRAGUE 225
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3510484
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: \"VIGILANCE\" CAMPAIGN: THE COMMONWEALTH CONNECTION
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PROP, PFOR, CZ, (ORNEST, OTTO), (BONTHRON, W JAMES)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/596b9ed1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009